UNIT 1 PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit highlights the need for Public Relations in a democratic type of government where the will of the people is supreme.

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- describe the evolution of the government information and public relations practices;
- evaluate the need for government information and public relations organization in India;
- describe the structure and functions of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting of the Government of India (GOI);
explain the attachment of Information Officers to different ministries and their role in publicizing the policies and programmes of the various departments;

- describe and evaluate the functioning of the Indian Information Service that runs the various public information disseminating agencies;

- analyze the role and responsibilities of a government PR person.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of Block IV. In the earlier three blocks, as you will remember, we dealt with the definition, nature and scope of PR, and the principles governing the functioning of PR. We also discussed the growth and development of PR in India. In this block, we shall discuss the role of PR in government and industry.

This unit explains to you the public relations practices in the Central Government thus providing an insight into the working of the information administration in India. We shall first deal with the evolution of government information system and PR organization. Then we shall also discuss in depth, the functioning of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which is the apex body for all information services of the GOI.

1.2 GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Information is power. It is also an input for knowledge and development. Dissemination of information to the public, particularly in a democratic society, has assumed great importance in the modern world. Every authority, in the past has made use of the information system not only for its own survival but also for keeping the public informed about its activities. There is little we can do without information. The importance of public information was underlined in the early 19th century by Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States. He believed it was the government’s duty to furnish the citizens with full and correct information. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India laid emphasis on “the free flow of information from the government to the governed for the successful functioning of democracy”.

Ancient India: We have historical evidence that there has always existed some kind of information system since ancient times, which has served both the rulers and the ruled. Only the tools and techniques have differed, evolving slowly from the crude to the sophisticated system of today.

In the past, kings and emperors devised their own system of information network to reach their subjects. In the fourth century B.C., the territory of Chandragupta Maurya, a powerful king, extended to the whole country, except the southern tip of India. The major problem then was communication with the people. One of the celebrated ministers of Chandragupta Maurya was Kautilya, better known as Chanakya, and he gave an exposition in his treatise ‘Arthashastra’ on the dissemination of information and development of the intelligence system suited especially for big kingdoms.

He emphasized the importance of a two-way communication spreading of information and gathering of intelligence in a polity. Kautilya’s ‘Arthashastra’ described how information was to be collected through spies and other informers. His network was based on news-carriers, spies in disguise, palmists, astrologers, magicians, dancers and even the least suspected widows.

Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta, introduced a system of visual form of information dissemination. He etched imperial edicts on rocks and stone pillars. Sanchi near Banaras is a living example of Sthopaas (inscriptions on rock pillars) through which King Ashoka disseminated government information to the public.

Medieval India: In Medieval India, Muslim rulers set up a system, both for the outflow and inflow of information, as a means to give a clear picture of the daily happenings in the country. The Moghuls (1526-1707) recognized the importance of information and established an efficient information network to collect vital news. The appointment of Khufia Navis (secret informers) and Vagia Navis (public news writers) by Aurangzeb is an example of the information network in that period. The information system evolved by the Moghuls was later utilized by the East India Company. It is relevant even today, so far as the collection of feedback information on the public reaction to the policies and programmes of the government is concerned.
Modern India: The first newspaper of our country — The Bengal Gazette: Calcutta General Advertiser, edited by James Augustus Hickey was started on January 29, 1780. It was a landmark event and gave an impetus to the growth of the official information system. Several other newspapers were published from Calcutta, Bombay and Madras towards the end of the 18th century. As a result, the need for providing information by the government to the newspapers, arose.

Queen Victoria took charge of the administration of India from the East India Company in November, 1858. Lord Canning was designated the Viceroy of India. In order to bring about better relations between the press and the government, Lord Canning established “the Editors’ Room” where journalists could come and examine the government records. This was done to improve the relations with the press. Another major step was the appointment of the first Press Commissioner, in 1880, exactly a century after the appearance of India’s first newspaper in 1780. This marked the beginning of the role of information services to act as a link between the government and the newspapers.

The growth of newspapers and the emergence of film and radio as a media of communication in the 20th century greatly influenced the GOI. The government learnt to use media for the dissemination of public information. It also felt the need to establish some organized information and public relations machinery as a regulatory agency to deal with these media.

Before Independence: Formal information activity of the GOI began as part of press publicity and was propaganda for the purpose of dissemination of the World War-I information to the newspapers. The government, in 1941, set up a number of Publicity Boards, throughout the country, with the Central Publicity Board in New Delhi. This was the first organized information set-up of the GOI.

In 1919, the GOI set up the Central Bureau of Information which functioned as a link between the government and the press. The important functions of the Bureau were:

- to examine the current trends in the English and Indian language press with the object of identifying topics of public interest and to seek further information on the same;
- to find out where the action of the government was criticized. In 1938, the Central Bureau of Information was reorganized as the Bureau of Public Information and J. Natarajan of the Pioneer, Lucknow, was appointed as its Deputy Principal Information Officer (PIO). The Bureau of Public Information formulated a policy, in 1938, for the utilization of government advertisement.

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Bureau of Public Information and All India Radio were placed under the new organization called the Directorate of Information and Broadcasting, for better co-ordination and effective publicity. In October, 1941, the Department of Information and Broadcasting was separately created and various other publicity agencies were brought under its control. The fact that a separate department was created by the government for public information and maintaining relations with the media, was yet another step in the direction of a well-established information and public relations set up in India. This was so until independence, after which, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was set up.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Fill the blanks with suitable words.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) ......................... is an ancient treatise which gives insight into the intelligence and information systems suited for big kingdoms.

2) The another of “Artiashastra” was ........................., also known as ..........................

3) ......................... were a form of visual communication in ancient India.

4) Emperor ......................... disseminated information through rock edits.

5) Agents responsible for information gathering appointed by Aurangzeb were ......................... and ..........................

6) ......................... was the first newspaper in India started by ..........................
1.3 MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

After independence (1947), the Indian government set up a full-fledged Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B). This was a revolutionary measure in the reorganization of the information and public relations set up of the Central Government. Once the department was designated as Ministry, its status was enhanced. It was also entrusted with the control of the information and public relations activities of various other departments in the Central Government. The Ministry of I & B being a nodal agency has since developed a vast network of its mass media units—with regional and branch offices as well as field publicity units at the grassroots level. These serve as the public relations agencies for the Central Government.

1.3.1 Functions

The objectives of the Ministry of I & B have been elucidated in its Annual Report 1991-92, as being “to inform, educate and entertain the people”. The media units of the ministry seek to create a climate of awareness, guide the directions of development, and ensure peoples’ participation in the implementation of policies, plans and programmes of the GOI. These objectives of the ministry are sought to be achieved through its media units like All India Radio (AIR), Doordarshan Kendra (DDK), Press Information Bureau (PIB), Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) and others.

The functions of media units or public relations departments in Central Government are broadly divided into two categories:

a) dissemination of information to the public on various policies, programmes and achievements of the department concerned through different media of communication;

b) making an objective assessment of public reactions to the policies and programmes of government as the latter are reflected in the newspapers, legislative forums and through direct interaction with the opinion leaders; and keeping the department informed of people’s reactions for adjustment of policies if any.

1.3.2 National Objectives

Besides providing information, education and entertainment, mass media in a democratic set up are required to fulfil the following needs:

1) to help preserve and strengthen the democratic way of life by inculcating faith among people in democratic institutions like judiciary, fair elections, secular character of state etc.;

2) to motivate people, directly or indirectly, and involve them in development activities;

3) to publicize nationally accepted themes such as:

   i) planned development through the application of Science and Technology;
   ii) national integrity and unity;
   iii) family welfare and population control;
   iv) improved methods of agricultural production;
   v) spread of literacy;
   vi) eradication of social evils like alcoholism, dowry etc.;
   vii) citizen’s need-oriented programmes: such as for farmers, for the control of prices of essential commodities, for employment opportunities etc.;
   viii) promotion of savings;
   ix) any other subject mentioned in the Directive Principles of the Constitution.
Check Your Progress 2

Notes:  
   i) Answer the following questions briefly in the space given below.
   
   ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) State the two major functions of media units in a broad perspective.
   .......................................................................................................................
   .......................................................................................................................

2) Enumerate some national objectives of mass media in India.
   .......................................................................................................................
   .......................................................................................................................

1.3.3 Organization and Structure

Main Secretariat: The Ministry of I & Broadcasting consists of a Secretariat, the eleven attached Media Units and the Indian Institute of Mass Communication for Advanced Study, Training and Research in Mass Media.

These media units are:

1) All India Radio;
2) Doordarshan;
3) Press Information Bureau;
4) Publications Division;
5) Research and Reference Division;
6) Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity;
7) Registrar of Newspapers for India;
8) Directorate of Field Publicity;
9) Photo Division;
10) Song & Drama Division;
11) Films Division.

There is no executive department for each medium of communication under the Ministry (See Chart of the organizational structure of the Ministry of I & B given below). The Ministry is also associated with autonomous bodies like the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), The National Centre of Films for Children and Young People (NCFCYP), the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), National Film Archives of India (NFAI), Directorate of Film Festivals, Central Board of Film Certification, and Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC).

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MEDIA UNITS

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, GOVT OF INDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECRETARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL INDIA RADIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLICATIONS DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECTORATE OF ADVERTISING &amp; VISUAL PUBLICITY</td>
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<tr>
<td>SONG &amp; DRAMA DIVISION</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MASS COMMUNICATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOORDARSHAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIELD PUBLICITY DIVISION</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHOTO DIVISION</td>
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<tr>
<td>RESEARCH OF NEWSPAPERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGISTRAR OF NEWSPAPERS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3.4 External Publicity

India's external publicity is handled by the External Publicity Division of Ministry of External Affairs in close cooperation with the Ministry of I & B and other departments of GOI. External publicity is important for:

- Projecting the correct image of the country abroad.
- Promoting understanding and support for Indian foreign policy.

This is achieved through audio-visual publicity, organization of exhibitions and cultural programmes e.g. Festival of India (in U.S.), pamphlets and other printed publicity material on India’s developmental effort.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes:

i) Answer the following question in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the unit.

1) Name the various media units under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

1.4 MEDIA UNITS

Though brief mention of the Ministry of I & B’s Media Units has been made in earlier Blocks, we will now discuss here the organizational structure of these Media Units for a better understanding of their functioning.

1.4.1 All India Radio

All India Radio (AIR), also known as Akashvani, is headed by a Director-General, who is assisted by several Deputy Director-Generals and a Chief Engineer. The executive functions are carried out by the 125 regional stations situated all over the country. Important divisions of All India Radio include: News Services Division, Home Services, Educational Programmes, Commercial Service, External Services Division and the Audience Research Unit. AIR’s Audience Research Unit provides qualitative feedback on audience size and composition, reaction of listeners’ to the programmes and assessment of impact on target audiences.

AIR at present broadcasts 286 news bulletins for a duration of over 38 hrs. 35 mts. in its Home and External services. These are broadcast in 62 languages and 131 dialects in Home Services and 25 languages including 16 foreign languages over the External Services. Special bulletins are also used, during elections or during crises like floods, earthquake or other disasters, to keep citizens informed on the latest situation. External Services Division of the AIR serves as an electronic ambassador of India. The overseas broadcasts are meant to project the Indian point of view on world affairs and acquaint the overseas listener with the developments in India.

AIR also lays special emphasis on rural programmes to provide media support to the task of national reconstruction. There are 140 MW transmitters, 43 SW transmitters and 47 FM transmitters. The Radio coverage as on 31-3-1992 was 85 per cent by area and 95.7 per cent by population.

1.4.2 Doordarshan

Started in 1959, Doordarshan has, over the years, grown into one of the world’s largest TV networks with its signals reaching about 80 per cent of the country’s population. It uses a domestic satellite for dissemination of TV services. The Doordarshan network by the end of
1992 consisted of 531 Transmitters of varying power and 20 Programme Production Centres spread throughout the country. At present, the National Service is available throughout the country while the Primary Channel is based on the Regional Kendras and the four Metropolitan Kendras, namely Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras, which are called Metro Channels. With the rapid expansion of the television network in the country, the scope for video software generation for television has increased.

The Doordarshan is headed by a Director-General who is assisted by Additional-Director Generals and the Engineer-in-Chief. Each Regional Kendra is headed by a Director. Its coverage includes national programmes, news and current affairs, commercials, rural programmes, educational programmes, special campaigns of social relevance like family welfare, promotion of savings, child immunization etc. The morning, afternoon and evening transmissions cover a variety of programmes to suit the needs of both the urban and rural population. Commercials were introduced on Doordarshan in 1976.

It is interesting to note that Doordarshan began its telecast as in educational experiment and has since considerably expanded its educational programmes, both—the syllabus oriented and enrichment type, in keeping with developmental aims. Programmes of higher education produced by UGC as well as IGNOU, are telecast on the national network. Besides this, special audience programmes for children, women, rural folk, artisans etc. are also telecast. National programmes focus on national integration, communal harmony, family welfare, art and culture, scientific innovation and current affairs. INTEXT service is provided to transmit information on stock market, train timings, air service timings, weather forecast etc.

With the approval of General Purposes Committee of both Houses of Parliament, Doordarshan commenced the telecast of the proceedings of the Question Hour of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha since December, 1991. Live telecast of address by the President, Finance Minister's Budget Speech, Railway Budget Presentation etc. are also now being telecast.

With more channels in the offing, the emphasis is now on increasing software facilities, production centres and feedback facilities to serve the public better.

Activity 1

The Newspapers regularly publish the details of programmes put out by All India Radio. Study and analyse one week’s programmes of your local station to find out how much of time is devoted each to information, education and entertainment. You may use the following format for guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of the Week</th>
<th>INFORMATION</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>ENTERTAINMENT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name of Prog</td>
<td>Name of Prog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1.4.3 Films Division

It is the largest agency in the world devoted to production and distribution of documentaries and news magazines. It also produces films for other departments of the government e.g. agriculture, defence etc. These films are screened throughout the country through various channels and also abroad through Indian embassies and TV networks. Important national and international events are filmed as news magazines. It also caters to at least 5-6 crores of rural audience every week, producing rural based features in regional languages and dialects. Many of its productions have won national and international awards. With informational and educational films, it seeks to disseminate information on important aspects of the country's life with particular bearing on vital issues of development. On an average, the Films Division produces about 26 news magazines, and 110 documentaries, featurettes and films every year. It is estimated that about 10 crore people view these films annually.

1.4.4 Press Information Bureau (PIB)

PIB is the central agency of the GOI for dissemination of information of its policies, programmes and activities. The Bureau supplies information to news agencies and the media through its countrywide teleprinter network. The Bureau's officers, who are attached to all departments, explain and interpret government policies and also help to evaluate public opinion.

The PIB disseminates information through press notes, handouts, communiques, backgrounder, features, press conferences, newsletters, conducted tours, photographs etc. For further spreading the flow of information, it is proposed to link the headquarters with all regional and branch offices through a data bank facility.

1.4.5 Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI)

The Registrar of Newspapers for India was set up in July 1956 to maintain statistics of newspapers in the country. It registers them, verifies their circulation and brings out an annual report, 'Press in India'. The Certificate of Registration is issued by this office when a new newspaper is registered under valid declaration. The Registrar allocates newsprint to various newspapers. It has branch offices in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

1.4.6 Publications Division

The Publications Division has established itself as the largest publishing organization in the public sector. It is headed by Director who is responsible for the production, sale and distribution of books and journals brought out by the Division to help readers to know India in its varied aspects—history, culture, economy, art, flora and fauna. Publications include biographies of eminent persons, speeches by national leaders, travel and tourism material and so on. Till the end of March 1992, the Division had produced 6,400 titles in English, Hindi and other Indian languages. The Division brings out 20 government journals in English, Hindi and other languages for the Central Government departments.

Yojana, a journal devoted to planning and development, is brought out in 12 languages. Kurukshetra, a monthly, published both in English and Hindi on behalf of the Department of Rural Development, disseminates information on various programmes of rural development. The 'Employment News' in English and 'Rozgar Samachar' in Hindi and Urdu is the largest circulated weekly of the division.

1.4.7 Directorate of Field Publicity

The Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) is the largest rural oriented publicity set-up. The Field Publicity Officers of this Directorate reach the people almost at their doorsteps in villages and at congregations like fairs and festivals to inform and interpret the policies and programmes of the government in local languages, dialects and provide on-the-spot elucidations.

The Directorate, headed by a Director-General, has 22 Regional Offices and 257 field units, including 72 border and 30 family welfare units, in various parts of the country. The field units have a vehicle equipped with cine-equipment and utilize both modern and traditional formats of publicity like films, song and drama programmes, oral communication and photo
exhibitions. They promote national integration and mobilize public opinion in favour of welfare programmes and reinforce people’s faith in fundamental national values.

The field unit is the only interpersonal media of the I & B ministry which acts as a two-way bridge. It also gathers people’s reactions to programmes and reports back the same for appropriate action by the government.

### 1.4.8 Photo Division

This division is responsible for documenting photographically the growth and development of the nation in social, economic and cultural fields. It maintains a Photo library with a valuable collection of photographic negatives of major news events which are of archival value. Black and white photographs of national and international events are supplied to the PIB. Photo coverages of VIP visits, both Indian and foreign, are undertaken. It supplies photographs for both internal and external publicity. It also provides training to photographers and organizes photo contests periodically.

### 1.4.9 Song and Drama Division

The Song and Drama Division, set up in 1954, utilizes the traditional media for the purpose of creating awareness among the people about various national programmes of socio-economic significance. A wide range of stage forms such as drama, dance, puppets, folk recitals and traditional plays are used for the purpose of social communication projecting developmental activities. These folk dances have the advantage of adaptability and help to establish easy rapport with the people. The division caters to the entertainment needs of the ‘Armed Forces’ in the forward areas. There are six departmental troupes in the division located at Pune, Hyderabad, Srinagar, Delhi, Patna and Bhubaneswar. The Division has a sound and light unit each at Delhi and Bangalore. The Division also utilizes about 600 private troupes which are registered with it. It has a centre at Ranchi under Tribal Project Plan to make use of the tribal talent in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa. The “Light and Sound” programmes have also proved to be very successful.

### 1.4.10 Research and Reference Division

The Research and Reference Division, set up in 1950, is responsible for furnishing reference material for publicity purposes to the ministries and its various media units. The division issues backgrounders, the biographical sketches of eminent Indian and prepares a fortnightly ‘Diary of Events’ covering important national events. It runs documentation and research services on matters of public interest, as well as events and trends in the field of mass communication in the country. It brings out two standard and authoritative works of reference on India: "India—A Reference Annual", "Mass Media in India". The division has a Reference Library with a large collection of books on various disciplines of mass media. The Library serves 700 accredited correspondents and a large number of media personnel on government duty. It is also a one-point depository of the reports of various government commissions and committees. A National Documentation Centre for Mass Communication was created in 1976 as a part of this division for collecting, interpreting and disseminating information about the events and trends in mass communication. It brings out eight services: “Current Awareness Service”, “Reference Information Service”, “Bibliography Service”, “Who’s who in mass media”, “Honours conferred on Mass Communicators”, “Media Memory”, “World Media Service”, “Bulletin on Film”.

### Check Your Progress 4

**Notes:**

1) Match the items under Group-A suitably with the items listed under Group-B

2) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) The Largest Central rural oriented publicity set up</td>
<td>a) Research &amp; Reference Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Agency that undertakes export of films and import of foreign films</td>
<td>b) Films Division</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4.11 Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity

This is a multi-media central agency for publicising policies, projects and achievements of GOI in the field of economic and social development. It caters to all departments of government (except Railways), Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and Autonomous Bodies in the following areas:

1) It issues regular recruitment advertisements for various departments;
2) Public awareness advertisements on different campaigns like Income Tax, Environment Protection, the Girl Child, Indian Air Force, New Economic measures, Gold Import Policy, are released in important newspapers;
3) Printed publicity material like folders, posters, brochures on various themes like Drug abuse, Solar cooker, Eighth five-year plan, Nehru Rozgar Yojana, besides booklets containing speeches of the Prime Minister on important occasions like SAARC Summit etc. are also brought out;
4) Exhibitions are organized even in rural areas for the benefit of backward people and also on special occasions like Adhi Kumbh Mela or the Golden Jubilee Celebration of Quit India to create awareness;
5) The out-door publicity unit launches major campaigns on special occasions like Independence Day, Consumer Day and so on;
6) The Audio-visual cell produces and telecasts audio and video sports on various themes in various languages;
7) In addition, special campaigns are also carried out for disseminating information and publicizing themes like national integration, communal harmony etc. on a nationwide basis.

1.4.12 The Directorate of Film Festivals

This was set up to help promote good cinema within the country and abroad. The directorate organises international film festivals, national film festivals, participates in film festivals abroad and gives away national film awards regularly. Special film programmes are also organised.
arranged under cultural exchange programmes or on important occasions like, SAARC meetings and so on.

1.4.13 National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)

NFDC undertakes a wide gamut of activities for the integrated growth of Indian cinema. Its activities include production of films, export of Indian films, import of foreign films, import and distribution of raw stock, construction of cinema theatres, production and marketing of recorded video cassettes to fight video piracy. The technical projects include setting up the latest electronic studio system with post production facilities at Calcutta and the setting up of the sub-titling centre at Bombay which has a full-fledged Unit with translation, checking and sub-titling facilities of high professional and technical quality. It also helps export Indian films, promotes the concept of low budget films and undertakes co-production of films and telefilms with Doordarshan.

1.4.14 Central Board of Film Certification

This Unit has a Chairman and other members appointed by the Central Government. The members of this panel comprise eminent educationists, journalists, social scientists, persons connected with film production and other professionals. Since films are important in shaping public opinion they are considered powerful instruments of motivation. The Films are certified under four categories: “U”, “UA”, “A”, “S”. The Board can refuse certificates or delete portions of films for any violation of guidelines.

1.4.15 National Centre of Films for Children & Young People (NCFCYP)

Formerly known as Children’s Film Society, the aim of this Society is to provide clean and healthy entertainment to children and young people. The Society has its head office at Bombay and other zonal offices at Delhi, Madras and Calcutta. It has gained recognition by organizing International Children’s Film Festivals in India and participating in Film Festivals abroad. It produces and acquires short films for children and caters to both rural and urban children.

1.4.16 Film and Television Institute of India

This imparts technical training in the art of Film making and provides in-service training to the employees of Doordarshan. It also conducts film appreciation courses of short durations.

1.4.17 National Film Archives of India

This Unit has the functions of acquiring and preserving the heritage of national cinema and the best of world cinema. It classifies, documents, film data and encourages film study. It has a large collection of several silent films of early days as well as recent Indian and foreign films. It collaborates with UNESCO for organizing regional seminars for development of film archives in the Asian region.

Check Your Progress  5

Notes: i) Fill in the blanks with suitable words.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of the unit.

1) ................ is the largest circulated English weekly of the Publications Division.

2) ................ is a journal devoted to planning and development.

3) A wide range of stage forms are used by the ........ to create awareness among people about national programmes of social significance.

4) Special campaigns, exhibitions and outdoor publicity are carried out by .................

5) ............... issues certificates to films for public exhibition.

6) Technical training and art of film making is imparted by ...............
1.5 INFORMATION OFFICERS IN DIFFERENT MINISTRIES

A democratic government which depends upon the popular will must ensure that its policies and programmes are properly presented and disseminated to the public through the various media of communication.

It has been noticed, over the years, that the government which keeps open its lines of communication with the people, not only gains credibility but can also govern effectively. A two-way communication set-up is needed: giving information to the people about the government’s activities and in turn receiving information (feedback) from the people.

The PIB is the central agency of the GOI for information dissemination. It is headed by the Principal Information Officer assisted by Dy. PIO. Under them there is a vast network of Information Officers who are the “ears and mouth” of the government.

The Information Officers/Departmental Publicity Officers of PIB are attached to the various ministries and departments of the GOI in New Delhi. Depending on the size and magnitude of the workload, different categories of Information Officers such as Asst. Information Officer; Information Officer; Deputy Principal Information Officer; Director, Public Relations; etc., are attached to all ministries like Human Resource Development, Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare, Civil Aviation and Tourism and so on. In fact, the Information Officer acts as Public Relations Officers of the Ministry. The Directors of Public Relations are attached to major ministries like Railways, Defence, Finance, etc. Though they are under the administrative control of PIB, these personnel work as the officers of the respective ministries for dissemination of public information. They are also expected to popularise the policies of the GOI, publicize the day-to-day activities and endeavour to remove any misconceptions or misunderstandings. In addition, they also keep the ministry concerned, informed of the trends and public reactions to its policies and programmes, as reflected in the press.

The Information Officer plays the role of a “trinity”—an Advisor, a Spokesman and an Evaluator. In the capacity of an Advisor to the ministry to which he/she is attached, the Information Officer is charged with the responsibility of taking the initiative to advise the ministry from time to time about the manner in which its policies and activities may have to be projected to the public, as also the medium of communication. This advice would be based on a situational analysis of the ministry as undertaken by the Information Officer.

As a spokesman of the ministry, besides disseminating factual information to the press, the Information Officer has to maintain continuous rapport with the editors, correspondents and other editorial staff of various newspapers to supplement the written material with oral briefings. Media persons always look up to the Information Officer attached to a particular ministry for information on policies, programmes and achievements of the ministry. The Information Officer, as a spokesman of the ministry has to attend to such oral enquiries besides providing any clarifications required by the media persons on policy matters. The officer thus becomes the source for media.

As an Evaluator or the antenna of the ministry, the Information Officer keeps his/her eyes and ears open for obtaining the feedback on the policies and programmes of the ministry as reflected in the press as well as through personal interaction with the opinion leaders. The ministry is provided with such feedback information in the shape of daily summary of press reactions. This is of immense use to the ministry in evolving policy decisions or in modifying the policies in tune with the pulse of the public.

All the ministries of the GOI ensure that the Information Officers have easy access to their respective ministries and secretaries. The information officers are invited to attend important conferences and committee meetings so that they know the important decisions taken and orders issued by the ministry. These officers spend half a day in the ministry concerned and the remaining half day in the PIB for releasing handouts and meeting the media persons. The Principal Information Officer of the PIB who co-ordinates the work of various officers, attached to different ministries, conducts weekly meetings to acquaint himself of work being done and issues guidelines for implementation.

1.5.1 Enquiries from Press

The Officers, attached to the various ministries, make use of the method of oral briefing to supplement the press releases sent by them. The accredited press correspondents to the GOI and the Departments are kept abreast of all the developments through regular briefings. The accredited press correspondents are asked to send their queries directly to the Press Information Bureau in New Delhi and get the necessary information in writing. The Press Information Bureau provides the necessary information in due course to the accredited press correspondents.
normally call on the PIB officers handling departmental publicity in the afternoons on working days to make enquiries regarding any aspect pertaining to the working of the ministry or the department concerned, or to receive clarifications and also to gather supplementary information. These are in the nature of queries. The answers to the queries are given to the press representatives on an exclusive basis. The material for such replies is collected from the ministry. Information which is of public interest, is however, given for general release. These daily meetings of press correspondents, is what may be called a “question hour”, and is perhaps the most important aspect of the PIB’s functions.

It helps provide an opportunity for the speedier dissemination of information and clarifications either from published documents or on the basis of information collected from officials of the ministry concerned. Thus, the Information Officer serves to interpret the government’s policies and does public relations work on behalf of the ministry to which he/she is attached. Such oral briefings bring the information officer and the press correspondent closer by creating mutual trust and understanding.

1.5.2 Press Briefings

Press briefings are arranged by the PIB officers to explain the background of a happening or a news story not necessarily for the purpose of its being used as a news story. Selected correspondents and representatives of AIR and Doordarshan are invited to such briefings. In the case of newspapers having several accredited correspondents, only correspondents, specializing in the subjects concerned, are invited. The office concerned makes decisions on the invitees list. The subject matter specialists are taken into confidence in providing such background material.

The Information Officer attached to the ministry acts as a catalyst, between the ministry and the press, in organizing press briefings, and press conferences. The press briefings are held by the Minister/Secretary or the senior official of the ministry.

1.5.3 Co-ordination with other Media

The Information Officers co-ordinate with other media units to get maximum coverage for the activities of their ministry/department. The Information officers attached to the various ministries inform the News Services Division, AIR and Doordarshan for coverage of events of their respective ministries/departments. They also inform the Films Division which may be in a position to send a cameraman for the coverage of the event. Officers attached to the ministry take the initiative in planning films which are worthwhile from the publicity point of view. Subjects having a large public interest are recommended for producing documentary films. Information officers are actively associated with the drawing up of programme of Publications Division for the ministries to which they are attached. They help the editors in the Publication Division by supplying the required material useful to them for the preparation of pamphlets and books.

The Information Officer assists Campaign Officers of the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity in planning and executing their campaigns. They maintain close liaison with the Directorate of Field Publicity Division to secure publicity for development schemes in rural areas.

In other words, the Information Officer/Public Relations Officer of the ministry or the department has ample opportunities to make use of the services of all media units of the GOI to project the image of the ministry.

1.5.4 Official Spokesperson

The Principal Information Officer, PIB is designated as a spokesman of the GOI for the purpose of briefing media on policy matters other than foreign affairs. The Information Officer attached to the ministry acts as a spokesman for that particular ministry. Spokespersons play an important role in disseminating public information to the media.

The spokesman of the government briefs the media persons after cabinet meetings. Similarly, the official spokesman conducts daily briefings if any major decision of the GOI is to be conveyed to the people. Therefore, he assumes great importance in the Information and Public Relations set up of the Central Government.
1.5.5 Guidelines for Government Public Relations Person

A successful Government PR person must:

- know the functioning of the government in its entirety;
- be familiar with the country's problems like poverty, population, illiteracy, caste, language, religious diversities etc;
- have a clear conception of the country's socio-economic development plans, overall view of different sectors, long and short term perspectives;
- establish a good rapport with the Press as an attractive source of information by avoiding an uncommunicative bureaucratic approach and use of administrative jargon;
- give publicity to the government and not to individuals or political parties;
- be fully conversant with the happenings of the department in order to be able to draft press releases and satisfy press queries in order to project the image of the government;
- have access to all information and be provided with all facilities;
- attend all internal meetings on policy decisions, reports, reviews or future planning projections;
- receive all background and agenda papers, replies to parliament questions and statements on follow-up activities;
- be able to issue suitable denials to counter distorted information or sensational reporting by the Press. And for this, being discreet helps, as too many denials lower the credibility and may prove to be counter-productive;
- plan the date and time of press release well in advance;
- be able to decide the form in which information is to be released: as a press note, handout or press communiqué;
- be able to make suggestions and plan in advance for holding press conferences and prepare handouts for distribution;
- be able to release information selectively, at times, if found necessary;
- release all information after obtaining clearance from appropriate quarters. In case any information received from a ministry is found to be in conflict with some information that has been already released by another ministry, the PR man must hold back the release and consult the concerned ministry to resolve the conflict; and
- be able to assess the situation and accordingly provide additional information at regular intervals e.g. during elections, war, any disasters, e.g. the earthquake in Maharashtra in 1993, major accidents, riots etc. when it is important to satisfy people and reassure them. This helps to prevent panic and spread rumours.

1.6 INDIAN INFORMATION SERVICE

In 1960, the Central Information Service (CIS) was formed, bringing together all the posts of Journalistic/Public Relations nature, in the media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, into one service. This has been a major landmark in the history of the Indian information system. All the media units came under the purview of the new information service. The biggest beneficiary of the new Indian Information Service personnel is the PIB whose Information Officers function with nearly every ministry or department.

The Indian Information Service comprises two major Grade Officers, A-Grade and B-Grade.

A Grade: All the Class I and above categories of officers belong to A Grade. These Officers are promoted from Grade II of B Grade category. The Information Officers; Deputy Principal Information Officers; Director, Public Relations; Joint Directors (field publicity); Directors of various media units come under the category of A Grade Officers. They were earlier recruited through the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to B Grade II Category or promoted from Grade III.
Public Relations Practices in Central Government

B Grade: The B Grade consists of three categories: Grade II, III & IV. All the officers belonging to this grade are recruited by the UPSC. Grade IV and Grade III Officers have separate examinations with Degree or Diploma in Journalism as the minimum qualifications, while the selection of the Grade II Officers is based on their ranking in the UPSC’s Central Civil Services examinations like IFS, IAS, IPS / Central Services. The Information Assistants, the lowest category, belong to either Grade IV and the Grade III and even Grade II, which are interchangeable. They include Assistant Information Officers, Assistant Editors (Publications division) Assistant News Editors (AIR), Field Publicity Officers, etc. The Grade III Officers, with seniority, are elevated to Grade II and officers from Grade II are promoted to Grade I. All categories of officers of the Indian Information Service are given professional training at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi.

The Second Press Commission made certain suggestions on the recruitment policy to Indian Information Service, which are valid here. “In our view the journalistic aptitude and experience should be required or tested for direct recruitment at every level of the Central Information Service. Proficiency in Indian languages should be ascertained before recruitment”.

If the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) manages the general administrative services, the Indian Information Service is intended to manage the information services of the Ministry of I & B, GOI. It is a professional special service dealing with public information. The officers of Indian Information Services are liable for transfer from one Media Unit to another. Thus they gain experience in different media units for managing multi-media publicity campaigns. The Principal Information Officer (PIO) is the senior official in the Indian Information Service who holds the rank of Additional Secretary in the GOI.

Check Your Progress   6

Notes: i) Answer the following questions in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

1) Discuss the role of Information Officers attached to the various Ministries in the Central Government.

2) Who is the Official Spokesman?

1.7 LET US SUM UP

From the ancient period to modern India, information has been an important input and a valuable resource for achieving the objectives and goals of government. In every period, some kind of information system existed not only to inform the public what the government was doing but also to ascertain the opinion of the public towards its policies and programmes. In the process, the 20th Century saw the birth of a formal information and public relations administration and its rise both vertically and horizontally. Public relations is a two-way communication process that has become concomitant with modern government in the handling of public information.

After Independence, the Ministry of I & B, GOI, was formed and its media units established as public information disseminating agencies spread throughout the country. Officials of the Indian Information Service were assigned to ‘manage information’ purposefully and effectively.

An important feature of public relations in the Central Government is the attachment of Information Officers to Public Relations Officers to ascertain the publicrp response. There is no doubt that the Information Officers have played an important role in disseminating government information to the public. The Information Officers are promotion officers, the grades of which are the following:

* Grade I: Assistant Information Officer
* Grade II: Information Assistant
* Grade III: Principal Information Officer

The Information Assistants are promoted to Grade II, and the Grade II Officers are promoted to Grade I. The Grade I Officers are given professional training at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi.
as spokespersons of these ministries and keep them informed of the public reactions as reflected in the newspapers. They arrange maximum publicity through media like the press, Radio and TV for the activities of the ministry. They strive to give additional information whenever situation necessitates e.g. during elections, riots etc. In the context of the historical perspective and the expansion of the media unit network, the responsibilities and role of a government PR person, as enumerated in this unit is of immense value. It will enable one to study the genesis and growth of public relations structure and its functions in the Central Government.

1.8 GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backgrounder</td>
<td>A document prepared to provide the facts and significance underlying a subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>An organized effort to formulate or alter the opinion of any group or groups on the subject.</td>
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<td>Channel</td>
<td>A place on a television dial where a station can be received. Also, one of the avenues for reaching an audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>Informational film or television show with a purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handout</td>
<td>Publicity release.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Link up of two or more broadcast stations to carry the same material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>The basic tenets of an organization that determining the pattern of its attitudes and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query</td>
<td>Written enquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release</td>
<td>Manuscript prepared to be issued to press or any mass media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Special activities designed to stimulate interest, in a person, cause, product idea or organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>A system of government by officials responsible only to their departmental chiefs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Believability. The speaker or the source of information should be regarded worthy of belief or credible by the receiver of information. Unless it is so, communication will not be effective as the message will also not be believed. Losing credibility can be disastrous for a PR person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>A deliberate effort to influence the opinion of others through repetitive messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Frequency Modulation: Broadcasting in higher frequency bands that have less distortions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.9 SUGGESTED READING

*Annual Report: 1991-92; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Govt. of India; New Delhi.*

*Mass Media in India; 1992; Publications Division; Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi.*

1.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: MODEL ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Arthasastra
2) Kautilya, Chankya
3) Rock edits
4) Ashoka
5) Khufia Navis, Vagia Navis
6) The Bengal Gazette, James Augustus Hickey

Check Your Progress 2

1) Firstly, dissemination of information on policies and programmes of the
government to the public. Secondly, providing feedback on public reaction to
the policies and programmes to the planners.

2) Some of the objectives include preservation of democratic institutions, motivating
people for developmental tasks, promoting national integrity, cultural heritage,
literacy, population control, savings habit, scientific thinking, eradication of social
evils etc.

Check Your Progress 3

1) AIR, Doordarshan, PIB, Publication Division, Research and Reference
Division, DAVP, RNI, Directorate of Field Publicity, Photo Division, Song
and Drama Division, Films Division, NFDC, NCFCYP, FTII, NFAI, IIMC,
Directorate of film festivals, Central Board of film certificate.

Check Your Progress 4

1) (e) 2) (i) 3) (g) 4) (h)
5) (a) 6) (b) 7) (c) 8) (d)

Check Your Progress 5

1) Employment News 2) Yojana 3) Song and Drama Division
4) DAVP 5) Central Board of Film Certificate

Check Your Progress 6

1) The Information Officers attached to the ministries act as eyes and ears of
the Ministry in so far as handling public information. They play the role of a
Trinity-Advisor, Spokesman and Evaluator. The officer issues press notes,
rejoinders, clarifications pertaining to the ministry besides answering the
queries of the media persons.

2) The Principal Information Officer, PIB is designated as the Official
Spokesman of the GOI dealing with the matters other than the Ministry of
External Affairs.